

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. IV.

BOSTON, FEBRUARY, 1896.

No. 9

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

Geo. H. Ellis, Printer, 141 Franklin St., Boston.

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GO NOT FAR FROM ME.

*"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy
water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are
gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his
loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night
his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the
God of my life."—PSALM xlii. 7, 8.*

Go not far from me, O my Strength,
Whom all my times obey:
Take from me anything thou wilt,
But go not thou away;
And let the storm that does thy work
Deal with me as it may.

On thy compassion I repose,
In weakness and distress:
I will not ask for greater ease,
Lest I should love thee less.
Oh, 'tis a blessed thing for me
To need thy tenderness.

While many sympathizing hearts
For my deliverance care,
Thou, in thy wiser, stronger love,
Art teaching me to bear,—
By the sweet voice of thankful song
And calm, confiding prayer.

Thy love has many a lighted path
No outward eye can trace;
And my heart sees thee in the deep,
With darkness on its face,
And communes with thee 'mid the storm,
As in a secret place.

O Comforter of God's redeemed,
Whom the world does not see,
What hand should pluck me from the flood
That casts my soul on thee?
Who would not suffer pain like mine,
To be consoled like me?

When I am feeble as a child,
And flesh and heart give way,
Then on thy everlasting strength
With passive trust I stay;
And the rough wind becomes a song,
The darkness shines like day.

Oh, blessed are the eyes that see,
Though silent anguish show,
The love that, in their hours of sleep,
Unthanked may come and go;
And blessed are the ears that hear,
Though kept awake by woe.

Happy are they that learn, in thee,
Though patient suffering teach,
The secret of enduring strength,
And praise too deep for speech,—
Peace that no pressure from without,
No strife within, can reach.

There is no death for me to fear,
For Christ, my Lord, hath died;
There is no curse in this my pain,
For he was crucified.
And it is fellowship with him
That keeps me near his side.

My heart is fixed, O God, my Strength,—
My heart is strong to bear.
I will be joyful in thy love,
And peaceful in thy care.
Deal with me, for my Saviour's sake,
According to his prayer.

No suffering, while it lasts, is joy,
How blest soe'er it be;

Yet may the chastened child be glad
His Father's face to see.
And, oh, it is not hard to bear
What must be borne in thee.

It is not hard to bear by faith,
In thy own bosom laid,
The trial of a soul redeemed,
For thy rejoicing made.
Well may the heart in patience rest,
That none can make afraid.

Safe in thy sanctifying grace,
Almighty to restore,—
Borne onward,—sin and death behind,
And love and life before,—
Oh, let my soul abound in hope,
And praise thee more and more !

Deep unto deep may call, but I
With peaceful heart will say,
Thy loving-kindness hath a charge
No waves can take away;
Then let the storm that speeds me home
Deal with me as it may.

—Anna L. Waring.

MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE.

"And he said, My grace is sufficient for thee."

The cry of the soul for strength is one which goes up sometimes from the heart of every one of us.

We feel the uncertainties of human experience, and we pray that our strength may be sufficient for our need. No man knows what his need is going to be, or when it shall be great. If we look forward and measure our conscious strength to-day against trials which we see to be quite possible to-morrow, we feel that we cannot be calm and firm in passing through them. But, if we are at all in the way of receiving strength from God, if we have not quite turned our backs upon him, if prayer has not quite passed out of our experience, then there is an element of strength in the case which we cannot measure. It is God's strength to-day, it may be ours to-morrow.

There are many elements of strength which we shall find necessary: strength to do and strength to bear; strength to speak and strength to be silent; strength to act promptly and strength to wait patiently;

strength of body and strength of spirit. And God's ways of giving strength are as various as the forms of our need.

There is strength for us in Truth. Wise thought is sustaining, noble thought is inspiring, thought clear and strong gives courage. Mere brooding, a weak yielding to moods, needless dwelling on dark things,—in these there is no strength. But a brave facing of the facts, an honest looking things in the face, a careful taking account of stock after loss, a falling back upon the things that abide, the unchangeable amid change,—these give strength, these often disclose to us resources of which we had not thought, grounds of encouragement which we had lost sight of.

The truth about human relations, the truth about God and our relations to him, the truth about sin and forgiveness,—to think on these things, and fill our minds with them, is a source of strength, because in this way we come to be more able to understand the divine order, or, if we cannot do that, to see more clearly why we cannot, not because it is not a perfect order, but because our minds are not large enough to take it in. Just as food has a natural power to strengthen the body, so truth has a natural tendency to strengthen the mind that lays hold on it.

There is strength also in Love, for it takes us out of ourselves. Love is the highest source of strength, when we make God himself the object of our love, and love him with a love so trustful and so complete that we are willing to suffer when the call to suffering comes to us in the order of his providence, willing because we love him. There is no strength like this, because it lifts us right up above the reach of all those things which would otherwise be sources of weakness to us.

Above all, there is strength in Faith. Faith is that power which makes the things which we cannot see real to us. God in his wisdom has hidden himself from our sight. He even hides from us, intellectually, the meaning of much which he does or which he permits. But from our faith he never hides himself. To the soul that trusts him he is always ready to manifest himself,—not always, indeed, to show us what we wish to know, not always to satisfy even our spiritual cravings, but always to give

us the strength that comes from spiritual contact with him, from feeling his presence, from the touch of his spirit on our spirits, making us calm, making us patient, stirring us to loving activities, which take us out of ourselves, and give our wounded spirits time to heal; for no one can be long with God without being roused from whatever depths of personal sorrow to impulses of love and service.

In the divine order there is strength for every need: it exists, it is adequate; and the only difficulty is to apply it where it is needed. I am sure that, if we have that faith and patience which befit us, as finite beings whose lives are ordered by an infinite will, it will not be long before we shall be able to perceive how the divine order is fulfilling itself in the things which seem at the time to be most violently thwarting it or most radically interfering with it. And I am convinced that, if we will let him, God will bring us into such sympathy with himself that we shall feel an assured confidence in the faithfulness of his love and the wisdom of his dealings with us, even when we cannot understand them.

I do not say that he will enable us to see the meaning of all that he does, or to recognize intellectually the fitness of all we suffer. I do not think he could do that any more than he could put a gallon into a pint measure, because it cannot be done. The conditions of the case forbid it.

But we can feel a truth where we cannot see it. And he will enable us to come into sympathy with him, spiritually when we cannot intellectually.—*E. C. Guild.*

THE STILL HOUR.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom
 Lead thou me on:
 The night is dark, and I am far from home,
 Lead thou me on.
 Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
 The distant scene: one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
 Shouldst lead me on:
 I loved to choose and see my path; but now
 Lead thou me on.
 I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
 Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on
 O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone,
 And with the morn those angel faces smile
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.
 —*John Henry Newman.*

WALKING ON THE SEA.

Once the fishers thine appearing
 Saw, and cried for aid:
 Want and toil behold thee nearing
 Now, no more afraid.
 Dear to misery's sons and daughters
 Now thy visits be,
 Walking on the whelming waters
 Of their stormy sea.

There one day, O Lord, our only
 Trust, shall sound thy feet,
 Coming up the pastures lonely,
 In remoteness sweet,—
 Coming in the dim, the golden
 Dawn, ere shadows flee,
 As thou cam'st in ages olden,
 Walking on the sea.

When the rent heavens rage and thunder,
 When the unfriended barque,
 Beaten of the deep, goes under,
 Foundering in the dark;
 When the yeasty waves all cover,
 When the spirits flee,
 Meet them, mankind's Lord and Lover,
 Walking on the sea.

—*Jean Ingelow*

Jesus comes into the home as the children's friend. The light-hearted, happy children looked up into his sweet, calm face, knowing he loved them. We must receive the kingdom of God as a little child. What is it to be childlike? It is to be open-hearted toward God. God help us to be more childlike, and to pray and work and live more nearly in his name.

It is not great deeds, but little cups of water and little farthings, though they be even all our living, that win the blessing.

God is always ready to forgive, but man is not always ready to receive. God cannot bestow unless we take, and we cannot take forgiveness until we can give it. Man, as he becomes God-like, must forgive.

Death sooner or later comes to us all. But, if it be the gate to higher life, who

would wish to escape it? On both sides of the river of Death, Love reigns. Fear ye not, therefore, children of God, heirs of life eternal.

A cheerful Christian is like a man living on the summit of a mountain. His days are longer and sunnier than in the valley. . . . Find God oftener in the gladness of life. See him not only through tears, but also in smiles. Be of good cheer: Jesus brought glad tidings.

Much as we need Christian work, there is need of something more. Rest, rest in God, rest in the bosom of his everlasting love. Come ye yourselves, and rest awhile "at the Master's feet."

We all need a deeper baptism into Christ's idea of greatness. It is another name for goodness. Jesus would win from evil by showing the divineness of good. Jesus gives a new order of nobility, a divine appointment. It is character. There is none so high. The rich and the poor, the learned, the unlearned, may belong to it. It does not come by birth. It cannot be bought by money. It is something to be won. Blessed are ye; for the nobility of heaven itself is yours, if you will reach forth and make it yours.

Behold the ground of judgment! This new Messiah would be bound to his fellow-men by ties so vital that every kind deed or every neglect toward the least would be as toward himself.

It is the spirit of the cross we want,—the spirit of self-denial, of patience, of submission and calm trust. The rugged path through which the world must rise is the path of sacrifice.

Here is a life which has light for all. This light, Jesus says, they shall have who follow him.

Jesus would link life with his coming death. His body, broken on the cross, was to become the bread of life to all the world. God's word spoken to his soul was in his life made flesh. So he lives on through all the ages, the way to noblest living, the truth that inspires, the life that always is.

The love of the holy one is so deep toward the unholy as to love him out of evil into

good. He lets his loving hand down to the lowest, that he may lift him to the highest.

The map of this life suggests another life: it is needful to complete the sphere. Both hemispheres of life are ours; and the sea does not separate, but unites.

The upper room of the soul should be large, with windows all around, that the clear breezes of thought may blow through; and it must be furnished. As we sit here at the open windows of Hope, we can see the bow of promise, telling us that the flood of evil will be at last stayed, and the new heaven and the new earth will appear, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Jesus, passing with his disciples from the upper room to the Mount of Olives, hears the lesson God has written on the vine. When we see a branch bending under the weight of ripe clusters, we do not ask if it abides in the vine, so the clusters of virtue prove that our branch is in living union with the living vine. Let the same sap of life that fills the vine flow continually into our little branch also, that so we may abide in the vine.

Our Gethsemane is here; and, if we follow the old, familiar path trod by the man of sorrows, we, too, shall find strength. Who so strong or so weak, who so wise or so foolish, who so self-sufficient or so self-distrustful, as to feel no need of ascending the mount with the Master?

How does Christ come? He is coming again and yet again, always coming, as Son of God and Saviour from selfishness and sin. Whose heart does not say, "All hail!" to such a coming, not in the clouds of heaven, but in the souls of men?

"Thy will, not mine, be done!" Words that never grow old! Springs of comfort that never fail! The troubled heart pants for the comfort they give. His spirit breathes upon the heart.

Often, like these faithful followers, we, having toiled all night and caught nothing, shall hear a voice, "Cast the net on the other side, and thou shalt find." Happy for us if we know, as did Jesus' loved disciples, "It is the Lord."—*W. P. Tilden, in "Leaflets for Lent."*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER.

Matthew xiv. 22, 36; *Mark* vi. 45, 56;*John* vi. 15, 21.

It is very important here to keep the sequence of the narrative. We have just read of the death of John the Baptist, of the shock this event gave to the plans and wishes of Jesus, and the destruction of his hopes. On whichever side he looked now, he saw death. If he remained in Galilee, it would be death by the hand of Herod, jealous of the influence of Jesus, as formerly of that of John the Baptist. The people, roused to anger by the murder of John, were no longer capable of receiving the religion of love and forgiveness in which lay the only hope for the future. If he left Galilee and went to Judæa, he would fall into the power of his enemies, the priests.

The grim figure of Herod Antipas now appears in the story. His voice growls, "John I beheaded; but who is this of whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him. (*Luke* ix. 9.)

Then, for a season of rest and prayer, Jesus retired to Bethsaida with the disciples, saying, "Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest a while." But the longing of the multitudes for his comforting words and the sight of his face turned the hour of rest into a last communion service. For he knew, if they did not, that it was the last time he should ever break and bless bread for them. (See lesson in November *Cheerful Letter*.)

And now he "constrained" the disciples to enter the boat, and go before him to the other side of the lake. He himself remained to bid farewell to the multitudes, perhaps to pray with them for the last time. Let us hope it was not those with whom he had just taken this "last supper" who "would come and take him by force, to make him a king"; but the peace of the hour must have been marred by this incident. The revised version gives us the passage thus corrected: "Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew into the mountain himself alone." This looks a little as if there were a new arrival, and it may not have been those who

had just listened to his words who would have "taken him by force."

The incident is narrated *only* by John. Therefore, it probably occurred *after* the disciples had entered the boat and left Bethsaida. Jesus seems to have told John of it afterward; for, had John remained at Bethsaida, he could not have given us the subsequent narrative, and nothing is said in any of the three Gospels of John being with Jesus when he overtook the boat.

Alford thinks that Jesus sent the disciples away because they would have seconded the wish of those who would have by force made Jesus king.

We now have an interesting point to consider. Why does *Matthew* give us the fullest account of the events that follow? We should naturally expect it from *Mark*. Mark is usually the most minute and graphic of the three Synoptics, and his account is supposed to come directly from Peter. But in this case not only Matthew has the most minute account, but it is only by Matthew that the very striking incident of Peter's endeavor to walk upon the water also is mentioned. Is it possible that the two stories—Matthew's and Mark's—have changed places?

However this may be, it is worth while to read and compare the three narratives, Matthew's, Mark's, and John's. Luke does not give it at all, but ends with the story of the loaves and fishes, and then reports the conversation where Jesus asks, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" In Mark this conversation occurs after the visit to the "borders of Tyre and Sidon."

Here is Matthew's story:—

"And, after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray; and, when even was come, he was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. And, when the disciples saw him* walking on the sea,

* "Saint John, in distinction to the Synoptists, here uses the expression *θεωρεῖν* (*John* vi. 19), which in the Gospels has the distinctive meaning of *fixed, earnest, and intent gaze*, mostly outward, but sometimes also inward, in the sense of earnest and attentive consideration. The use of this word, as distinguished from merely *seeing*, is so important for the better understanding of the New Testa-

they were troubled, saying, It is an apparition; and they cried out for fear. But, straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

"And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus. But, when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And, when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Peter seems to have felt some doubt at first whether it were really Jesus or not that he saw.

The story in Mark adds these words, which are worth noticing: "*And he would have passed by them; but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was an apparition, and cried out. For they all saw him, and were troubled.*"

This implies a doubt on the part of those to whom the tale was told, and an earnest asseveration from Mark that "*they all saw him.*"

John's story implies some private conversation between himself and Jesus. He says:—

"And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come unto them. When, therefore, they had rowed about five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, they behold Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh unto the boat; and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I: be not afraid. They were willing therefore (R.V.) to receive him into the boat; and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going."

That John had had some private confer-

ence with Jesus is evident from the expression, "And it was now dark, and Jesus was not yet come to them." As they had left Jesus behind some hours before, they would not naturally *expect* to meet him in the middle of the lake, unless there had been some promise to that effect. John did expect it, notwithstanding the antecedent improbability. The phrase, "They were willing *therefore* to receive him into the boat," seems to show that, at first, they were not willing, being too much frightened. It is to be hoped that John was not one of these terrified disciples.

Edersheim thinks that Jesus had perhaps intended to rejoin the disciples by land some time during the coming day, but that, seeing their distress and danger, he came directly to them across the water. Some critics have asked, "How could he see them at night?" It was during the fourth watch that the event occurred; that is, between three and six in the morning. They forget that the date of the story is shortly before the passover, the 15th Nisan, "when the moon would shine on an unclouded sky, all the more brightly on a windy spring-night, and light up the waters far across."

Jesus on the mountain-side could see a long distance across the lake; and the little sail, or, as Edersheim thinks, the sail-less mast, rocking in the bright moonlight, would be distinctly visible.

The lake was about six miles across. If they had "rowed twenty-five or thirty furlongs," there were still fifteen or twenty furlongs to be traversed. Why does John say, "*Straightway* the boat was at the land whither they were going"?

The wind seems to have fallen at that time, and thus the disciples were relieved of fear. Perhaps they now were overcome by the sudden sleep that follows great fatigue and excitement, the sailors meantime rowing steadily through the now quiet water, until the boat gently touched the shore, and the sleepers awoke, to find themselves arrived, scarcely aware that any time had elapsed since Jesus had entered the boat.

Those who reject all "miracles," and regard a miracle as "a violation of the laws of nature," will naturally regard this story as an interpolation, notwithstanding the life-like touches and the unconscious proofs of

ment that every reader should mark it. We accordingly append a list of the passages in the Gospels where this word is used: Matt. xxvi. 55; xxviii. 1; Mark iii. 11; v. 15, 38; xii. 41; xv. 40, 47; xvi. 4; Luke x. 18; xiv. 29; xxi. 6; xxiii. 35, 48; xxiv. 37, 39; John ii. 23; iv. 19; vi. 2, 19, 40, 62; vii. 3; viii. 51; ix. 8; x. 12; xii. 19, 45; xiv. 17, 19; xvi. 10, 16, 17, 19; xvii. 24; xx. 6, 12, 14. It will thus be seen that the expression is more frequently used by John than in the other Gospels, and it is there also that its distinctive meaning is of greatest importance."—*Edersheim, "Life and Times."*

truth and genuineness. Those who regard a miracle as a *revelation* of a law not yet fully understood will have no great difficulty in accepting the story as it stands. Jesus himself laid no importance on miracles as such, rather the reverse. But every story that reveals the sympathy and tenderness of Jesus, his friendship for his disciples, his natural impulse to heal, cheer, save, and comfort, is of priceless value. L. F. C.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.]

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"A Commentary on the Gospels," Livermore; "Theology of Universalism," Dr. Thomas Thayer; "The Pitts Street Chapel Lectures"; "Thoughts on Moral and Spiritual Culture," R. C. Waterston; "The Gentleman," George Calvert; "Breakfast in Bed, or Philosophy between the Sheets," George Augustus Sala.

The *Week of Song*, a monthly magazine devoted to music in church, school, and home, is offered by Herr Büchler, Boston, Mass., Lock Box 2009.

Hope Cornell, 469 State Street, Albany, New York, will be glad to pay postage on the books offered by her in the December number.

For books offered by the Newtonville Branch in the January number, apply to Miss F. M. Pettee, Newtonville, Mass.

REQUESTS.

READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Rev. George H. Taylor, Rocky Ford, Colorado;

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Cayuta, Schuyler County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

A number of requests are this month omitted, because sent to the editor instead of to the Book Club secretary. This causes a delay of a month (sometimes two months).

The Book Club secretary would be glad to receive more offers of good standard magazines to be sent after reading. These offers to be printed in the Book Club. *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, the *New World*, the *Popular Science Monthly*, the *Atlantic*, *Littell's Living Age*, *New England Magazine*, *Arena*, *Contemporary Review*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Youth's Companion*, *Pansy*, *St. Nicholas*, *Harper's Young People*, etc.

Rev. George H. Taylor, Rocky Ford, Colorado, would be very glad to receive *Popular Science Monthly*, *Economic Quarterly*, *Forum*, or *Harper's Monthly* for his own reading.

Mrs. Sallie Williams, Tom Bean, Grayson County, Texas, would like reading matter.

Mrs. W. U. Stafford, Pine Grove, Henderson County, Texas (formerly Bradford, Texas), asks for the *New World*, *Golden Days*, and easy instrumental music.

Mrs. Julia M. Ashley, Deerfield, Mass., Box 45, would be pleased to receive *Silver Cross*, the *Other World* and *This*, and the *Ladies' World*.

Mrs. F. L. Moseley, Smithville, Virginia, will be greatly obliged for a copy of Mansy's "Manual Geography."

Florence Allen, Tredway, Virginia, asks for Emerson's "Essays" and a key to Venable's "Arithmetic."

Mr. S. P. Learned, Sebeka, Minnesota, who is forming a Sunday-school of some twenty scholars, asks for some interesting reading.

Mrs. T. S. Beard, Rough Creek, Charlotte County, Virginia, desires a book on shorthand, the "Eclectic" preferred.

Mrs. John Morgan, Lacombe, Alberta County, Canada, asks for the *Housewife*.

Miss M. J. Sebren, Bellmont, Louisiana, would be glad of the *Christian Register*.

Mrs. E. J. Bidwell, Perry, Oklahoma, asks for reading for herself and son (fourteen years of age).

Miss Lizzie Jones, Vulcan, Orange County, Virginia, would like to receive reading, history preferred.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

AUTHORITY OR CONSCIENCE.

It may be true, as Jacob Abbott says, that a child under ten years of age has no reason that can be depended upon, and must be governed by authority. But I think a little child has a very strong sense of what is right, perhaps stronger than at any other period of his life; and, the sooner that sense is appealed to and developed, the more powerful factor it will be in after life. It is certainly easier to give a hasty blow, and it takes less time to say, "Go to bed at once," or "Go without your dinner," than it does to show a child why its conduct is objectionable. But no child can be made to feel in that way that he has done wrong or to wish to do right. The struggle should not be between parents or guardians and the children, but between the child and his natural weaknesses and temptations, the parents acting as allies, or, if necessary, as a general who directs the movements of the soldiers against a common foe. There are few families in which this is done; but I have known them, and surely the time spent in this way is well repaid by the affection and harmony developed in the family.

I would, as I have said before in the *Cheerful Letter*, always let a child know that there is authority over it, if conscience and reason are appealed to in vain. But I would certainly appeal first to conscience, which is simply consciousness of what is right and fitting. I find many suggestive and helpful hints in Jacob Abbott's books, and would recommend them to others; but I would certainly read them with an independent mind, and consider them far from infallible. The story in "The Mother at Home" of the father who whipped his little boy five times to make him say the letter A does not seem to me to be at all an example to be followed.

OLD MAID.

It is strange to see Jacob Abbott, the advocate of "Gentle Measures," mentioned in the same breath with those who strike blows and treat children with harshness and violence. The point he makes in regard to reasoning with children is that it shall be done at a time when the child is capable of receiving and benefiting by it, and not when he is made only more irritable

and impatient by replying with an argument to the "*Why* must I?" "*Why* mayn't I?" which come only from a desire to postpone obedience and substitute a discussion.

As Mr. Abbott can speak much better for himself than any one can speak for him, we will give some brief extracts from his own writing, adding only that, if we understand him, it is his belief that it is those who are *not* able to govern children who strike blows, try to *force* children to obey this or that command, or say, "Go to bed at once," or "Go without your dinner." The extreme gentleness of his own methods is unsurpassed, and except by those who have *genius* in this direction unattainable. It can only be distantly approached by a humble imitator.

HOW AND WHEN TO REASON WITH
CHILDREN.

[Jasper, the spoiled boy, has just run away from school, and on his way back to New York meets his grandfather on the train. His grandfather questions him gently and kindly, and Jasper relates the circumstances of his evasion.]

"Well, Jasper," said Mr. Grant, after a few minutes, "I think you showed a great deal of energy and courage in making your escape."

"Yes, grandpapa, I knew you'd say that I did right."

"Oh, but I don't say that you did right," replied Mr. Grant: "on the other hand, I think you did wrong. I said I thought you displayed a great deal of energy and courage. Don't you think a person may show courage and energy in doing wrong?"

"Why, yes, grandpapa, I suppose they may," said Jasper.

We see in the comments thus made by Mr. Grant upon Jasper's escape something of the secret influence which he had already begun to acquire over Jasper's mind. He was discriminating and just in his judgments, and did not condemn him in a sweeping and unqualified manner when he did wrong. Almost all the conduct of children, the good as well as the bad, is of a complex nature. There are good elements and evil elements mingled together in it. Mr. Grant was always careful to recognize and acknowledge the good, if there was any, and

that opened Jasper's heart to whatever he might have to say about the bad.

Another thing was that Mr. Grant, in talking with his grandson, did not make too much of a child of him. He talked to him in manly language, and treated his judgment and opinions with a certain respect. He reasoned with Jasper a great deal, when there was nothing in the circumstances of the case to bias Jasper's mind in respect to the subject,—in other words, when the reasoning did not relate to anything he was to do or not to do. A boy can begin to reason pretty early, provided his inclinations do not come in the way. If they do, he is entirely blinded by them, and cannot reason at all. It is on this account that it is so unwise and impracticable for parents to attempt to govern their children by reasoning with them. Children must be *governed* by authority, though they may be *instructed* and *enlightened* by reason.

"Had we better get out at the upper station, Jasper," said Mr. Grant, "or go down to the lower station?"

"At the upper station," said Jasper: "that's the nearest way. Then we can go right up to our house."

So they stopped at the upper station. As they were getting out of the car, Mr. Grant took hold of Jasper's hand, saying:—

"Now show me the way, Jasper, and choose out a good carriage. You ought to know more about the carriages than I, you have lived in New York so long."

"Yes, grandfather," said Jasper. "Come with me. I'll show you the way. The carriages are up this way."

So Jasper, who had often stopped at this station before when coming down the North River with his mother, led his grandfather along the platform to the place where the carriages were standing. He was very much pleased at having the duty of selecting a carriage assigned to him.

"Which do you look out for most, Jasper, when you are choosing a hack," asked Mr. Grant, "the horses or the carriages?"

"The horses," said Jasper. "I always want a good pair of horses, such as will hold up their heads and trot off well."

So saying, Jasper began to examine the carriages and horses on the stand; and, after

making his choice, he and his grandfather got into the carriage and drove toward Mrs. Bleeker's house. On the way Mr. Grant said,—

"Do you like horses, Jasper?"

"Yes, sir," said Jasper, "very much indeed."

"I am glad of that," replied Mr. Grant; "for, when you come to Lendon, you and I can have some good drives. Can you drive a wagon?"

"Oh, yes, grandfather, easy enough. I've driven mother's carriage often and often."

"Have you?" said Mr. Grant.

"Yes, sir," said Jasper, "all the way from the stable round to the door."

"Indeed!" said his grandfather.

"And, besides that," said Jasper, "I have driven from the door round to the stable. But, grandfather, when can I go to Lendon? When are you going home?"

"I am going home this evening," said Mr. Grant.

"Then I mean to ask my mother to let me go with you," said Jasper.

"Ah! but I'm afraid that will hardly do," rejoined Mr. Grant.

"Why not, grandfather?" asked Jasper.

"Because I am so very particular," said Mr. Grant. "I am very particular about being obeyed. A boy that is at my house is obliged to do just exactly as I say; and he must do it, too, the first time that I say it. I never stop to talk with him or reason with him at all. Just as quick as I give him an order, presto! he must obey. Now you have not been used to that, and you would not like it: you have been all your life accustomed to disobey, or, at least, only to obey when you liked the command."

"Ah! yes, grandfather," said Jasper; "I should like it very well. Just try me, and you will see how well I like it."

"And, besides," continued his grandfather, "it will be hard for me. You see, you would disobey me in some little thing or other: then I should be obliged to make you obey, and that would be very unpleasant for me. I like you very much, and it would be very hard for me to have to force you to do anything; but yet I should be obliged to do it."

"But, grandfather," said Jasper, "I will always obey you myself. I will, really and truly,—I certainly will."

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

DESCRIPTIVE INITIALS.

The initial letters of the following words are those of the man or woman whom the words describe; as, "Terrible Complainer." T. C. is Thomas Carlyle.

- I. Comical Delineator.
- II. Always Loyal.
- III. Marvellous Light.
- IV. Came Confidently.
- V. Our Well-known Humorist.
- VI. Rustic Bard.
- VII. Declamatory Weightiness.
- VIII. Thoroughly Honest.
- IX. Feminine Nobleness.
- X. Ever Eloquent.
- XI. Recognized Wisdom Everywhere.
- XII. Her Books Sell.
- XIII. Happy Children Appeared.
- XIV. Judge Birds.
- XV. Perfectly Tremendous Boaster.

—M. R. Case.

How, darkly beautiful, my *first* is seen
When skies are clear and weather is
serene;

My *next*, where weary traveller stops at
night,

Will oft be found to give him much de-
light;

And when, at sea, we run before my *third*,
We fly and skim the waves like any bird,
And o'er the ocean bound as we desire.

My *whole*, a prima donna of renown,
Who loves the country better than the
town.

—S. F. C.

From Egypt old to modern days
My *first* took part in children's plays.
My *next* the fishes safely guides
Through currents swift and rushing tides.
My *whole*, in gold and crimson dressed,
Like evening clouds along the west,
Grows brighter as its life expires,
And dies at last in gloomy fires.

—S. C. C.

Answers to Riddling Forest.—1. Date. 2. Lime. 3. Beech. 4. Medlar. 5. Aspen. 6. Pear. 7. Tulips. 8. Cotton. 9. Fir. 10. Orange.

Answers to Arithmetical Puzzles.—1. xix. xx. 2. Twice twenty-five is fifty; twice five and twenty is thirty. 3. 199—99.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, March 6, at 10.30 A.M., at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

All interested in *Cheerful Letter* work, whether members or not, are cordially invited to be present.

Will any minister who receives this paper do us the favor to send to our secretary names of lonely people living in places remote from schools, libraries, and churches, especially mothers living on ranches or prairies, young people without means of education, and invalids, whether grown-up people or children.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

Our Book Club department has grown so large that we shall ask of all who in the future write to us for books to send the name of some minister as a reference,—when possible, the minister of the church to which they belong.

We fear that some of our subscribers have the impression that by subscribing for *The Cheerful Letter* they will be sure to receive books. The Book Club has proved an attractive department of our paper; and many of our subscribers are interested in sending books to those who are unable otherwise to obtain them. But we engage only to keep the Book Club open for offers and requests, and that under certain conditions.

We remind all who send parcels or boxes with books, papers, etc., to correspondents

or to libraries, that it is absolutely necessary to write at the same time to the receiver, enclosing the receipt which shows that the express or freight charges on the package have been paid. For want of this precaution, valuable packages have never been received. It is not probable that any of our *Cheerful Letter* friends send packages without prepaying them, but it is a common mistake of the express agents to charge the receiver for a prepaid package.

N.B.—PLEASE READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING FOR BOOKS.

In our December number a list of excellent books was by accident attributed to the Cambridge Branch instead of to the Portsmouth Branch. The requests already received for these books have been forwarded. This error was not due to the secretary of the Book Club; and so far as any one was to blame, it was the editor.

DIRECTIONS.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals may be sent to the treasurer as above. The subscription is fifty cents a year.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Louise Howe, as above.

Send all notices of *changes of address and requests for discontinuance* to Miss Howe. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.